

Appl. No. 10/670,522
Amdt. Dated: July 6, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 21, 2005

REMARKS

Introduction

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, and 16 have been amended. Claim 15 has been canceled without prejudice and disclaimer. Claims 1-14 and 16-24 are pending in this application.

No new matter has been introduced in this amendment since all amendments are supported by the originally submitted specification, drawings, and claims.

Rejection under 35 USC §103

Claims 1 and 12

Claims 1 and 12 are rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Inagaki et al. (JP 04-140763) in view of Sato et al. (US Patent No.: 6,574,011). Reconsideration of these claims is respectfully requested for the reasons stated below.

The Examiner indicated in the eighth paragraph on page 6 of the Office Action mailed on April 21, 2005, that claims 2-6, 11, and 15-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a connecting conveyance path of claim 2 which is not taught or rendered obvious by Inagaki et al. and Sato et al. as indicated on page of the Office Action mailed on April 21, 2005, and further amended to change "first, second, and third paper feeding paths" to "a plurality of paper feeding paths" which has been presented in the original claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is deemed to be allowable in its presently amended form. Further, claim 12 is deemed to be allowable since it depends from allowable claim 1.

In view of the above points provided by the Applicant, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 12 is respectfully requested, and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

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Claim 7

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Inagaki et al. in view of Sato et al. as applied to claim 1 above, further in view of Hashimoto et al. (U.S. Patent 6,445,903). Reconsideration of this claim is respectfully requested for the reasons stated below.

Claim 7 is deemed to be allowable since it depends from allowable claim 1 as presently amended.

In view of the above points provided by the Applicant, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 7 is respectfully requested, and allowance of this claim is earnestly solicited.

Claims 8-10, 14 and 20-24

Claims 8-10, 14 and 20-24 are rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Inagaki et al. in view of Sato et al. as applied to claim 1 above, further in view of Takahasi (U.S. Patent 5,839,014). Reconsideration of these claims is respectfully requested for the reasons stated below.

Claims 8-10 are deemed to be allowable since they depend from allowable claim 1 as presently amended.

Claim 14 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 15 in accordance with the Examiner's indication, while claim 15 has been canceled. Accordingly, claim 14 is now deemed to be allowable in its presently amended form.

Claims 20 -24 are also deemed to be allowable since they depend from allowable claim 14 as presently amended.

In view of the above points provided by the Applicant, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8-10, 14 and 20-24 is respectfully requested, and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Claim 19

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Inagaki et al. in

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view of Sato et al. and Takahasi as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Hashimoto et al. (U.S. Patent No.: 6,445,903). Reconsideration of thess claims is respectfully requested for the reasons stated below.

Claim 19 is also deemed to be allowable since it depends from allowable claim 14 as presently amended.

In view of the above points provided by the Applicant, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 19 is respectfully requested, and allowance of this claim is earnestly solicited.

Allowed Claim

Claim 13 has been allowed.

Conclusion

In view of foregoing amendments, arguments and remarks, all claims are deemed to be allowable and this application is believed to be in condition to be passed to issue.

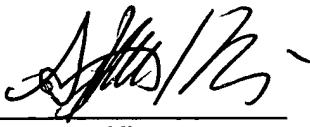
No fee has been incurred by this Amendment.

If any further fees are required in connection with the filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our deposit account number 502827.

Should any questions remain unresolved, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicant's attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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